

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2023

George Cheeks
President and CEO
CBS Entertainment
51 W. 52nd St.
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Cheeks,

As a proud Latino immigrant and a Member of Congress, I write to echo the concerns, voiced by many within my community, regarding the failure of your network to appropriately caption the live coverage of the 2023 Grammy Awards.

As you are aware, although the artist Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, known professionally as Bad Bunny, was scheduled to perform, producers failed to anticipate the need for Spanish language closed captioning for his live performances.

Millions of Spanish - speaking Americans watched the Grammy's open with Bad Bunny's performance on the East Coast, seeing closed captioning as "[SPEAKING NON-ENGLISH]" and "[SINGING IN NON-ENGLISH]"

Furthermore, as Bad Bunny gave his acceptance speech in Spanish for best Música Urbana album, the captions again read "[SPEAKING NON-ENGLISH]."

This is deeply regrettable, and displays a lack of sensitivity and foresight. For too many Spanish-Speaking Americans, it felt disrespectful of our place in our shared society, and of our contributions to our shared culture. For the hearing impaired community, this failure was hurtful.

At the same time, this distracts from the remarkable achievement by Bad Bunny, the first-ever Spanish-language Album of the Year nominee, whose record topped the Billboard 200 for 13 weeks of the year.

Over 13 percent of the United States population speaks Spanish at home, and the U.S. is home to the second largest population of Spanish speakers in the world. At current trends, by 2050, one in three people in the U.S. will speak Spanish.

I am gratified by your efforts to address concerns, including adding closed captioning to replays of the performance, but I urge you to take serious measures to address the failures which made this mistake possible.

I am mindful of a 2021 study by non-partisan researchers at the Government Accountability Office, which found that Hispanics and Latinos make up approximately 12 percent of the American media workforce, compared to 18 percent of the non-media workforce. Within media, service jobs have the highest share of Hispanic and Latino workers (22%) and management roles have the lowest (4%).

I believe that proper representation for historically underserved communities in senior roles is critical both for my community, and for your efforts to serve the American people. I welcome the opportunity to engage further with you on this critical issue, and hope to work together to ensure that all voices can be heard, honored and respected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Garcia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Garcia

Member of Congress